Hastings,

An ancient Port Towne in

Sussex.

CHARLES,

By the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. TO all people to whome these our Letters Patents shall come, greeting.

WHEREAS We are credibly given to understand aswell by the humble Supplication and Petition of our true & Loyall Subiects the Maior and Jurats of our Towne and Port of Hastings within our County of Sussex, being subscribed by our right trusty & wel beloued Counsellor Edward Lord Zouch Lord Warden of our Cinque Ports; As also by a Certificate under the hands of our right trusty & wel beloued Henry Lord Hunsdon, Sir Thomas Pelham Knight & Baronet, sir Nicholas Parker & sir John Wildegos Knights, Nicholas Eversfield Esquier, High Sheriffe of our Counties of Surrey and Sussex, Thomas Aylcombe, and Anthony Apsley Esquiors, Justices of the Peace within our foresaid County of Sussex: That our said Towne of Hastinges hath bin & yet is the ancient Port Towne of the Cinque Ports, the which standing & being right over against the Kingdome of France upon the maine Sea, hath heretofore not onely bene well inhabited with warlike people that haue manfully defended themselues against the sundry inuasions & attempts of the Enemy, but also it hath bin plentifully furnished with Fishermen & good Mariners, and other seruiceable Seamen, and well stored with Shipping, Barques, and Boats for seruice & for shipping, from whence not onely our owne Houshold, and our City of London, with diuers other places from time to time are plentifully furnished with Fish, but also Our Navy Royall upon any occasion is the better appointed, by reason of their skilfull Mariners and cunning Seamen; But the same Towne is lately very much decayed & impouerished for want of a Peere there to succour and defend their shipping in fowle weather, whereby hath happed vnto them of late yeares infinite great losses both of shipping & men, and many Strangers from time to time that saile that way haue been & daily are cast away, to the vndoing of many our Subiects, and the losse of many good Seamen. For preuention whereof, our poore subiects the Inhabitants of our said Towne & Port to their great charge & impouerishing made out a Peere into the Sea with Timber & Rocks, that their Ships in any stormes might ride safe vnder the Peere, but the cost and charge of making & repairing the same from time to time hath been so great & burthensome, that it hath in a maner vndone the said Towne, & driuen away many of the best & wealthiest men, to seat themselues elsewhere, so that to this day not only the said Peere for want of reparations is fallen downe & quite destroyed, but also the said Town that is seated in a place of danger from inuasion of Forraine Enemies, which heretofore hath defended it selfe in many assaults, is now relinquished, and for the most part vnpeopled, and the trade of fishing there decayed, all passengers that way distressed & left destitute in stormy & tempestuous weather, and vndefended against Pyrats & other Enemies. Upon Our Princely consideration wherof, & minding to prouide for the preseruation of the liues of Our people, the maintenance of shipping, and the continuance of our Townes vpon the Sea coast, the increase of Fishermen & Mariners, and that the prouision of our Houshold, our City of London, and Countrey be not disturbed: And taking also into Our Princely consideration, that our said Subiects the poore Inhabitants of Hastings, by reason of their great charge already from time to time bestowed in repairing the said Peere, are not able any longer (howbeit most willing) to contribute thereto, The effecting whereof, by the opinion of men experienced in these affaires, will amount vnto the Sum of Two Thousand Pounds & vpwards, We haue thought good aswell vpon the humble Petition of the said Inhabitants, as also vpon the recommendation of our foresaid right trusty & wel-beloued Counsellor, together with the humble request of all our foresaid Justices made vnto Us on their behalfes, to commend the furtherance of so needfull & laudable a worke, vnto the charitable and serious consideration of all our louing and wel disposed Subiects with in certaine Counties & Cities of this our Realme hereafter mentioned: Not doubting, but that all good subiects (well weighing with themselues the publike good ensuing by this worke) will be ready and willing, and the rather for our good commendation hereof, to extend their liberall contributions more then in ordinary Collections, towards the finishing of the said Peere, wherein they will declare their willingnes to augment the good and prosperity of this our Realme.

KNOWE Ye therefore, that of Our especiall Grace & Princely compassion, We haue giuen & granted, and by these our Letters Patents doe giue & grant vnto our true & Loyall Subiects the Maior & Jurats of our said Towne of Hastings for the time being, and to euery other person or persons that shall be deputed or assigned by them by a Deputation vnder their common Seale of the said Towne, full power, licence, & authority, to aske, gather, receiue, and take the Almes and charitable benevolence of all our louing Subiects whatsoeuer aswell Spirituall as Temporall, English borne, Denizens, and Strangers within our Counties of Southampton, Wiltes, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornewall, with our City of Winchester, our Isle of Wight, and Towne of Southampton, with our Cities of Salisbury, Bristoll, Bath, and Wells, and Exeter, with our Towne & County of Poole: And in all Townes corporate, priuiledged places, Parishes, Villages, and in all other places whatsoeuer within our foresaid Counties, and not elsewhere, for & towards the fortifying, repayring and finishing of the said Peere, and the better and more speedy execution of this Our Royall pleasure.

WHEREFORE We do by these our Letters Patents will and require all our Sheriffes in their seuerall Shires & Counties, all Justices of Peace in their seuerall Diuisions, and all Maiors, Bailiffes, and other head Officers within any Citty, Towne corporate, or other Jurisdiction; And also all Parsons, Vicars, Ministers, and Curats of Parishes, Churches, & Chappels, not onely of their owne parts to be helping with their liberall deuotion towards the said good & laudable worke, but also to recommend our speciall pleasure, and the furtherance of the repaire of the said Peere, in their seuerall Sessions, Cities, Townes, Liberties, Parish Churches, Hamlets, or Villages, for the better obtayning of liberall contribution thereunto. And We will & command all and euery the chiefe Constables of euery Hundred, and where no chiefe Constable shall be, then We require the Justices of Peace or other head Officer of any such place, that as such time & times, as the said Maior & Jurats for the time being, or any person by them deputed vnder their common Seale of the said Towne, shall come & repaire to you or any of you, with these our Letters Patents vnder our great Seale of England, that forthwith vpon sight thereof, you receiue & take the Briefes or Copies thereof, and them deliuer, or cause to be deliuered to the Minister or one of the Churchwardens of euery Parish within your seuerall Hundreds, limits, or bounds, to be published by ye Minister of euery such Parish the next Sabboth day after the receipt thereof (if with conueniency it may be done) otherwise the next Sabboth day following. And We will & require you the said Parsons, Vicars, and Curats, for the better stirring vp of a charitable deuotion, deliberately to publish & declare the Tenor of these our Letters Patents or the Briefe thereof, within your Parish Churches and Chappels to all our louing Subiects within the time before prefixed, and that when no other Collection shall be made, Exhorting & perswading them to extend their liberal contributions in so good & needfull a worke. And We require you the Churchwardens of euery Parish where such Collections are to be made as aforesaid, that immediately after ye publishing of these our Letters Patents, or the Briefe thereof, you carefully collect & gather from seat to seat the benevolence of all our louing Subiects, aswell strangers as others, and such as are absent from Church to repaire vnto their houses for their benevolence, and to set down in writing in a paper Booke the name of the Parish, together with the seuerall names & Sums of those which giue and contribute in any Citty, Towne, or Hamlet, and the sum totall which shall be by you so gathered, to be by the Minister & your selues endorsed on the Back side of the Briefe, in words at length, and not in figures, vnder your handes: And the sayd Briefes so endorsed, and the sum or sums of money so gathered, together with the said paper Booke, you the Churchwardens of euery Parish, or Petty Constables, or other inferior Officers, aswell in euery Citty, Towne corporate, priuiledged places, or elsewhere, shall returne vnto the Justices of Peace, Head Officers, or chiefe Constables from whom you receiued your charge, or to their Successors within Ten daies after such Collection made. And you the said Justices of Peace, Head Officers, and chiefe Constables, to deliuer the said Money, Paper Booke, & Briefes to our High Sheriffe of the same County at the next Quarter Sessions. And you our High Sheriffe to deliuer, or cause to be deliuered the foresaid Money, Paper Bookes, and Briefes the next Terme following after such your receipt vnto our trusty & wel-beloued Subiect Robert Tichborne Cittizen & Lynnen Draper of London, at his house in Cheap-side, who vpon the receipt thereof, shall giue vnto our said High Sheriffe an Acquittance for his discharge. And you the said Robert Tichborne from time to time vpon demaund, to deliuer vnto our foresaid subiects the Maior & Jurats of Hastings aforesaid, or to their Deputie, or Deputies authorised vnder their common Seale, all such Sum & Sums of Money, together with the said Paper Bookes, & Briefes, taking from them, or any of them, an Acquitance for the same, whereby it may appeare vnto Us, that there hath been no default or neglect of this Our Royall pleasure, for the performance of so good and needfull a worke. Any Statute, Lawe, Ordinance, or prouision heretofore made to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.

IN witnesse whereof, we haue caused these our Letters to be made Patents for the space of One whole yeare next after the date hereof to endure. Witnes our selfe at Westminster, the Sixteenth day of May, in the Eighteenth yeare of our Raigne of England, France, and Ireland, and of Scotland the Three and Fiftieth.

Steward.

God saue the King.

Printed by Thomas Purfoot.

Note. It is his Maiesties pleasure, for the better furtherance of this necessary worke, (in regard it is a Towne of Defence, and hath been often assaulted by the Enemy) that the Churchwardens of euery Parish, shall haue a speciall care in performing of the Collection, according to the intent and true meaning of the Letters Patents, whereof this is a true Briefe.